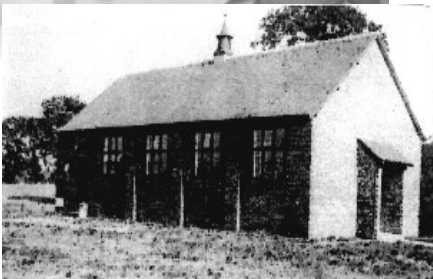


# Linkline



## Memories of Heald Green



Welcome to this special 'Memories' edition of

# *Linkline*

The Parish Magazine of St Catherine's Church, Heald Green



The articles were published in *Linkline* between 2012 and 2014, and they are reprinted exactly as they were at that time, although some of them were actually written at least 10 years earlier.

Please bear this in mind when you see references to 'now' —their 'now' may well have been 20 years ago!

We are indebted to the authors and to the *Linkline* Editorial team of the time who had the idea to gather the information, and the foresight to keep it safe so that it can still be enjoyed.

**Les Clough**  
(current *Linkline* Editor)

## *Here and There*

Talking with Margaret Burns and Barbara Hughes, I discovered that some articles had been written several years ago about the local community of Heald Green. When I read them I found them absolutely fascinating and certainly felt that they were worth another look.

The idea evolved slightly into a 'mini series' that will be included over the next few issues. There are two themes; the first about Heald Green ('Here') in years gone by and the second about the Parishioners, and where they grew up ('There') and became involved in church.

This edition we have an introduction to the history of St Catherines from Barbara, followed by memories from Hilda Bamber ('Here') and Peter Sunderland ('There').

We would be delighted to hear your memories if you want to contribute.

**Les**

In 2000 I thought it would be very special and personal to St. Catherine's today to hear from those who remember Heald Green when it was a country hamlet within the Parish of St James, Gatley. First, I will give a brief history of the church and hall and then let our members, who recall the growth, complete the tale.

In 1889 a mission service was held in a cottage next to a blacksmith's shop on Finney Lane with 29 people attending and, from this, the seed was sown for a local church.

Services were held by the Vicar of St. James, Gatley in Long Lane Congregational Chapel, the Social Institute in Finney Lane, Cheadle Etchells School and at Shadow Moss School, to meet the needs of those who lived in the small but growing community.

Eventually, land was donated by the builder Thomas Dale Neal, in memory of his mother Catherine, initially on Finney Lane where the Heald Green Hotel stands, but a more central site was asked for and so the Outwood Road plot was offered and accepted.

The construction was started in 1933 by the builders, L. Brown of Wilmslow, costing £1,600 and there is a foundation stone in the wall near the side doors dated 10<sup>th</sup> June 1933 which commemorates this.

This first building is now the main hall part of the Church Hall and, later, this was extended at the front to bring in a kitchen and toilets for all the social occasions for which it was also used.

On 16<sup>th</sup> September 1933 it was officially dedicated to St. Catherine and also to the memory of the benefactors' mother. In the 1960's, during Rev. Michael Culliford's incumbency, the side extension was added to give more meeting rooms.

The next step was the building of the actual Church at a cost of £23,000 with the foundation stone being laid on the 16<sup>th</sup> July 1955 and the Consecration by the Bishop of Chester on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 1956.

The first Priest-in-Charge was the Rev. James Stanley Leather, followed in 1935 by the Rev. E. H. Christopher, until 1940, when he left to join the Navy. Next were the Rev. W. Grimwood (1941-1945), the Rev O. A. Waller (1945-1951) and the Rev. E. A. J. Mercer (1951-1953), all were curates at St James. On 24<sup>th</sup> May 1953, the Rev. Peter Lucas was licensed to St. Catherine's and later became its first Vicar.

Here is the full list of Priests in Charge and Vicars: -

### **Priest in Charge**

**1949-** Orlando E. Walker.

**1951-** Eric A. J. Mercer.

**1953-** Peter S. Lucas.

### **Vicars : -**

**1958** – Peter S. Lucas.

**1962** – Michael Culliford.

**1980** – David C. Garnett.

**1987** – Richard A. King.

**1993** – Roger D. Clarke.

**1999** – George D. C. Lane.

**2007** – James Ambrose.

**Barbara Hughes**

## *Here* - Hilda Bamber



'I was born in Horwich in 1904 and was the youngest and only daughter, with six brothers. My father worked at the LMS Works there and Harold, my brother worked at Cloister Press in East Didsbury. The main reason we moved to Heald Green was, after my father died, my mother thought it would be better to move nearer to Didsbury so that Harold could come home for his lunch instead of taking sandwiches each day. They first looked at Cheadle Hulme but there was no direct service to East Didsbury, then considered Gatley but finally decided on Heald Green, being only a 7 minute journey.

A residential development had started in Outwood Drive with the first four houses well on the way. They purchased the first semi No.1, and were the first residents. I have lived here for 71 years.

On Finney Lane there were four grocers, a butcher's shop, two confectioners, a drapers, and the Co-op. The local doctor was Dr. Hewetson whose surgery was in Styal. Shadow Moss Road was a cobbled lane, Styal Road was a country lane with very little traffic, and from a bedroom, looking towards, what is now Wythenshawe, we could see a large cornfield and a large wood at the end. There was a lane right through to Nixon's farm and onto Robinson's nurseries, called Blackberry Lane, which was a very favourite walk in the summer and autumn.

On Outwood Road there were just two bungalows with a pond at the back on which ducks swam, and a market garden. At the back, in fields where our Vicarage is, was a thatched cottage and on the site of the Vicarage itself was a building used by the cycling 'Clarion Club'. This was a prominent spot for cyclists to meet but, sadly, was eventually gutted by fire. There are still some damson trees to be seen near the football fields from the old farmland.

Between Outwood Drive houses and those on Finney Lane was a stretch of land owned by Ellis & Sons, builders which was turned into a Tennis Club. Residents around bought shares and had exclusive rights to the use of the Club. The entrance was by the path next to our house and the club was fenced round to keep animals out. It was a very happy club giving its members many special hours of fun. Eventually, 'outsiders' from Wythens Road were allowed to join but it was never the same. Harold, my brother, was the Secretary and paid the rent himself all through the war. I do have one very sad event associated with the club. When my young puppy died it was diagnosed by the Vet Major Wright, who lived in Westwood Road, that it had been poisoned. I suspected a fellow lady member of the club was responsible and eventually she left the area.

Sadly, the Club closed and the land was purchased by a developer called Truselle. However, to gain access from Outwood Drive, he wanted to purchase our house and knock it down and we refused. The land was eventually added onto the gardens of the Finney Lane houses.

The church we attended in Horwich was St. Catherine's and it seems ironic that it is at St. Catherine's that I still worship. At first, we started going to Cheadle Parish Church but my father heard that a lay-by on the road home was used as a 'red light' area so we were banned from going there. Then we went to Gatley St. James and I used to walk and run through the lanes to get there. At one Communion Service I fainted and when the Vicar, the Rev, J. Tyler Whittle, called at our house to see if I was all right, it was agreed that I should eat some food before I went, regardless of the rule at the time. We also went to Wilmslow Parish Church and after the service we would 'parade' through the

village and up to Alderley before we had to be home, usually by train.

Monthly services were held in Long Lane Congregational Chapel by the Vicar of Gatley, also in the Social Institute on Finney Lane, Cheadle Etchells School and Shadow Moss School. The Methodists first used a black and white building at the side of what used to be GT Autospares & Cycles on Finney Lane until they were able to build their own church on Brown Lane.

The first Priest-in Charge was Rev. Stan Leather and he married a Heald Green girl. I will always remember the annual Rose Queen Fete, which was held then on the open fields where the Village Hall is now and it was a wonderful village occasion.

I never went to work because my father thought that it was my place to look after my mother after she had had typhoid fever, which had weakened her heart. My mother did the cooking and I did the housework until mother died in 1938 leaving Harold and I at this house. I was never idle and ran the local W.V.S. as Deputy Branch Leader from 1939 up to 1970.

We played a major part when evacuees came to the area not only from London but also from Manchester. We took two evacuees who thought that they were in 'Paradise' with all the fields, farms and animals around. We were paid 10/- a week for each one and 17/- for two. Many drifted back home eventually through home sickness and what seemed like a lack of real danger. St. Catherine's Church Hall was used as an overflow schoolroom for Cheadle Etchells at the height of the evacuee influx.

Harold was in the Home Guard and our house was listed to billet airmen from the nearby 6IM.U. and 75M.U. Medical. We had all sorts of men and, as soon as one left, another airman arrived. Neal Avenue residents took in the W.A.A.F.s.

I started a local Darby & Joan Club and, after me, it was run on by Evelyn McCracken.

I remember the happy times of the Tennis Club, dancing at Gatley Y.M. Club, walking in the country lanes which were all around, and the togetherness which was part of village life. Sad memories are the gradual erosion of the countryside, the intrusion of the airport, the end of the tennis club and the death of Harold in 1980 leaving just me in this house but with very many happy memories.

*\* I have had a walk up the passage at the side of Hilda's house and there is tennis court still there at the back. (Ed)*

## Here and There

Continuing our series of memories from parishioners past and present, we start with a piece from Emily Watson, originally penned more than 10 years ago. We continue with a recent contribution from Dawn Dooler.

I'm sure you'll agree it adds more 'meat to the bones' as we build up a picture of Heald Green and Saint Catherine's in years gone by.

We would be delighted to hear your memories if you want to contribute.

**Les**

### Here - Emily Watson



I was born Emily Rogerson at Ringway in 1923 which is the area between Moss Nook and Hale Barns near where the Romper Pub is today. My father, on his demob from the army, worked for a short time as mechanic and chauffeur for the Linney family who lived at Heald Green House in Moss Nook.

When I was two years old, my father purchased some old farm buildings on Finney Lane and converted them to a garage, where it is still sited today. *(The garage has been gone a while now—it was sited where the Co-op is now—Ed)* It had one petrol pump and carried out repairs on cars, bicycles, motor bikes and he also sold paraffin, puncture outfits, tubes, tyres and charged up the accumulators for wirelesses. He ran a taxi service with many local people going with him on a day trip to Blackpool as this was often the only holiday they would have. Eventually he sold the Garage to Esso and Frank Cartledge became the manager.

Our family consisted of my parents, sister Joan and myself and at first we lived over the Garage, before moving to a new council house on Finney Lane, the second semi-detached from West Avenue, and eventually purchasing 197 Finney Lane opposite the Garage. These houses were built in the late 1920's. I can still see us as children playing whip and top on Finney Lane and just moving out of the way when a horse and cart came along.

There was no school in Heald Green for me when I was five so, because we were living at the Griffin end of the village, I caught a bus there to take me to Handforth C of E school. In 1932 Cheadle Etchells Primary School was built and I was transferred.

I went to Sunday School at St. Catherine's which was held in the original one-roomed hall and I still have a book presented as a prize on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1936 titled 'Heralds of the Cross' *(definitely chosen by the teacher)* but had to go to St. James's Gatley to be confirmed and married. I remember Rev. M. Leather as the first curate at St. Cath's.

The first shop to be built in the village was wooden and double fronted, on the opposite side to the railway station and where the carpet shop now stands. *(now the 'Bargain Shop' opposite the station—Ed)* It was owned and run by Miss Brooks as a drapers and my mother always said that there was often just one dress in the window. Next to it came two more, a newsagents owned by Dicky Dunn and a chemist owned by Sam Roberts, and these shops are still there selling the same merchandise.

Next to our garage, on the right hand as you face the road, were two old semi-detached houses and it was next to them that the fourth shop was built as I remember so well.

It was for John Williams, the grocers and, as was always the practise in those days, a lime storage pit was dug out at the front of the development with its sides built up with earth. On this particular day, when the builders had gone home, we were walking or rather running around the edge of this pit and eventually I slipped in. I rushed back to Mum with my legs covered in lime and I can vividly remember her getting newspapers to scrape of the lime.

I do remember three big 'moneyed' houses in the village. Heald Green House on Styal Road owned by the Linney's, Beech House next to our garage, owned by the Ward Jones family and, for a while, was run as the Heald Green High School but eventually knocked down to make way for the parade of shops where the Co-op Stores starts (*Tesco—Ed*), up to the Estate Agents, Roger Dean's.

The third was opposite the library and owned by the Ricketts family. This became the library and the dairy and eventually was demolished for the mews house development after Waterford's moved out.

In 1939 we had a little evacuee called Walter, from Manchester, who stayed with us for years and continued to visit us with his mother long after the war had ended until both died.

Our Saturday afternoon treat was a visit to the Electra Cinema in Cheadle to watch the black & white serials and it was rumoured at one time that Heald Green was to have its own cinema where Freshfield is now.

My husband, Don, & I met when he was on demob leave and we went dancing at the Rex Ballroom in Wilmslow travelling by train from Heald Green. It was definitely love at first sight. His family had moved from Stretford and bought No.1 St. Anns Road South and when they moved to Bollington it was purchased by Gladys and Cliff Short. Don & I married in 1947 and went to live in grandmother's old house in Hasty Lane, Ringway after she had moved. The cottage had no gas, or electricity, we cooked in the coal oven and had paraffin lights.

One evening, Don's brother and his wife came for supper and I had cooked sausages. Up to the day he died, he always said that these were the best sausages he had ever tasted.

Eventually in 1951 we purchased, as second owners, this house in Eastleigh Road and moved in with our son Peter. He attended St. Cath's Sunday School and later became an Altar Boy in Michael Culliford's Incumbency

Of the airport, my first flight was with my father on the last flight of the opening day but my mother and sister would not come. It was in an open cockpit and cost 2/6p each for the short trip. Before then I used to be able to cycle to Ringway on a country lane with farms and fields on either side to see my grandparents.

Those days will never return but I still would not like to live anywhere else.

**Emily Watson**

Emily still lives in Heald Green.

## *There* - Dawn Dooler



I was born in Collar House, Prestbury in the early 1940's which, at that time, was where St Mary's Maternity Hospital had been evacuated to because of the threat of Air Raids in the City. We lived in a bungalow in Shirley Avenue all of which were originally built as weekend homes for the people of Manchester. Our bungalow was offered to us for £200 but, because my father was serving in the war, no financial commitment could be made. When we did eventually buy it, the price was much higher. I have seen so many changes all around that you would never envisage at the time that Heald Green, now a suburb of Stockport, would grow from a small hamlet to a village of around 13,000 people today. I remember that there were many farms; nurseries; orchards; pools for fishing &, during the war, many Army & RAF Camps & even Prisoner of War Camps. The railways & bus routes made commuting to Manchester easy & with plenty of light industry, families were keen to move out into the Cheshire clean air. Ringway Airport was growing in importance and naturally has now encroached considerably into Heald Green.

At the back of our bungalow there was a cornfield which stretched right up to the main road (A34) & in another field there was a big pit which filled with water in which people would fish & we would skate on it when it froze over in the winter. One day my mother looked through the window & saw paratroopers stalking along the hedgerows & thought that we were being invaded by the Germans & was frightened to death. After a while, any military presence, be it troops, convoys or supply vehicles became part of our daily lives.

The bungalows across the road also overlooked fields with plenty of water lying around & with a stream flowing across Greenway Road from the fields off Bolshaw Road. This is still there, being under the gardens or in a gully between the houses at the end of Greenway & has been culverted across Outwood Road & onwards. There were several communal Air Raid Shelters around & ours was on Greenway Road corner. The few houses built at this time were along the main road end of Bolshaw Road & Greenway Road but I do remember a big house with an orchard near to the junction of Bolshaw Road & Cross Road, called Rose Villa.

The Royle family worked Bolshaw Farm, which was down a short lane from the road, with dairy herds & poultry & sold eggs & milk to local shops & nearby residents. Robinson's Nurseries grew tomatoes, chrysanthemums & fields full of rhubarb, which was very much part of our staple diet. At the very end of the road, in the fields approaching Styal, was Nixon's Outwood Farm & I do remember that they had a very successful tug-a-war team. There was a military camp down Clay Lane, just past Lakeland, which trained Alsatian dogs.

I went to Cheadle Etchells Primary School on East Avenue then onto Broadway Secondary School in Cheadle. I started work at Umbro's in Wilmslow & was with them until I retired. After 40 years Service they paid for a weekend trip to Wembley for myself & my friend, Irene. I can remember that Macclesfield Town Football Club was playing Northwich Victoria in the Final wearing kits supplied by our Company. I sat in the Royal Box & presented the Cup to the winning team. I also had the privilege of walking on Wembley's hallowed turf. They also paid for me to take a trip to Canada to see my sister & her family.

I was in the Handforth Brownies & on one camp I was made May Queen & carried a bouquet & crown



made out of wild flowers. From here I joined St Catherine's Girl Guides with Elsie Worthington as the Leader.

I helped to deliver milk for Nixon's & vegetables for Dick Hulme, both by horse & cart & newspapers for Taylors who had the shop & café on the main A34 road. These premises were where Quick's Ford Garage used to be & is now the Southgate Centre. I went to the Cottage Hairdressing Salon, opposite Bolshaw Road, owned by Mrs Smith & it is still run by her family today.

My childhood memories are of fresh air; freedom to roam in the open countryside, often making dens to hide in; having bonfires in nearby fields; riding on tractors; helping with haymaking; going to Styal Woods & catching the bus to Wilmslow & Alderley Edge for walking in the woods. Most Saturday afternoons were spent at the Cinema – Electra in Cheadle & Cheadle Hulme; the Rex & Palace in Wilmslow; the Tatton in Gatley & for dancing we went to the Rex & the Regal in Alderley Edge. Romany's Caravan in Wilmslow was magical to us.



We would be 'glued' to the wireless listening to Violet Carson presenting Children's Hour & trips out to Blackpool were really exciting.

We would collect jam jars & got one penny for 1lb jars & 'tuppence' for 2lb jars plus lemonade bottles to get spending money to be able to go to the Bramhall swimming baths. We picked blackberries from the hedgerows & eat them, never thinking if we could pick up anything nasty. We would go train spotting on Stanley Road near the railway bridge & the excitement of waiting for the Flying Scotsman to roar pass.

All I can say now, as I recall it all, is how fortunate I was to have such freedom & unrestricted times to enjoy it all.

***Dawn Dooler***

## *Here and There*

Continuing our series of memories from parishioners past and present, we start with a piece from Emily Gladys Short, originally penned more than 10 years ago. We continue with a recent contribution from Barbara Hughes.

Another step in the picture of Heald Green and Saint Catherine's that we are building

We would be delighted to hear your memories if you want to contribute.

**Les**

### *Here - Gladys Short*



**GLADYS SHORT** – I was born, Gladys Cooke at Moss Nook in 1908 into a family of 3 girls and one boy. My father was a butcher and we lived on the premises, which was opposite the Tatton Arms. My mother used to live in a cottage where the airport is now. We all went to Shadow Moss School further up on Ringway Road and, because there was no church in the area, the building acted as the church with the Rev. Tyler Whittle of Gatley being the minister I most remember, coming once a month to celebrate Communion. We went to church both Sunday mornings and evenings with all our social activities being there.

I remember Hilda Bamber and three other girls were always invited to our parties, as there was nothing in Heald Green. This building has long been demolished for the growth of the airport.

My father bought a pony & trap & I remember the horse sliding & slipping precariously on the cobbled Ringway Rd. There was Heald Green House at Moss Nook owned by the very wealthy Linney family and they had tennis courts at the back on which we were allowed to play. When we went carol singing to the house, we were always invited in and had hot ginger beer and mince pies in front of a roaring fire. Sadly now this house has been converted to flats.

One of my uncles worked on the construction of Heald Green Station, which was a wooden building with just one platform, and opened in 1909. I became friendly with a porter and I used to help him to trim the oil lamps, which lit the station.

I met my husband Cliff in 1942 when we went dancing at Hale Barns, using bicycles as the mode of transport. We were married at St. Wilfreds in Northenden and bought our house in St. Annes Road in 1948, from the original owner. Both Cliff & I worked in Manchester & we travelled by train (puffers) - the fare was 4/3 pence per week.

The first fish shop in Heald Green was a wooden hut on the left-hand side of the station and was run by Norbury's.. There were only small cottages and lots of fields and smallholdings around.

My uncle ran Gatley Rose Growers on Outwood Road and lived in a small cottage there. In Moss Nook, my father, three uncles and grandfather rented the rights all around there for shooting pheasants and rabbits on the land. Rose Hill Cottage on Ringway Rd (still there) had a big kitchen where all the guns used to hang.

The first real residential developments started in Outwood Drive where Hilda lives.

I remember Beech House on the left hand side of Finney Lane where the Co-op Stores is now. It was owned by Cheadle Royal for their patients as part of the idea of living in the community. (It was said that the house had no inner doors). We used to love watching the landaus with four grey horses drive out taking patients for a ride into the countryside. Then came another large house called Brown Edge, and then fields until you came to a big house, which became the Dairy and was also used as the Public Library.

Carrying on again down Finney Lane there were some hospital cottages and then came a row of three shops in a converted barn which was a Heathcote's butchers, Cash's cobblers, and Finnegan's fent shop. I also remember the big chimney of the hospital laundry next to them being knocked down.

Going down St. Annes Rd. North, St Catherine's first Vicarage was the second house down after the hospital houses on the corner but because larger premises were needed the new Vicarage bought was at No. 191 (I think), Finney Lane between St. Annes Road South and Ash Grove and the Rev. & Mrs Waller lived there. This was later deemed as too small for when the Bishop came to stay, so Cliff and Bill Nelson found the house on Outwood Road and were delighted at their find. It was built by the local builder, Walter Meredith, for himself and it was he who donated the East Window in the church.

When we moved into Heald Green we were visited by the Rev. Waller who asked if we were C of E or RC. On stating that we were C of E he said that he was glad to meet us and welcomed us to worship at the Church Hall & we have continued our association with St. Cath's ever since. A neighbour invited us to a social evening at the Church Hall, all to raise funds for the hall extensions & the new church. We were asked by the M.C. to take over the social side and willingly did, organising all the future events & providing all the refreshments ourselves. People came from miles around to the events and so the hall had to be extended.

To raise the money for the church itself, bricks were sold at £5.00 each and when it was officially opened by the Bishop of Chester in 1953, Cliff was a churchwarden and proudly took part in his official capacity. We spent all our spare time at the church looking after the gardens in the churchyard and helping in all the fund raising events for many years.

The Curate's Board in the church was donated by me in memory of Cliff, after he died.

My biggest disappointment was that because I had no children, I was not allowed to join the Mothers' Union as a full member when the branch was formed in 1949 but later this rule was rescinded and I became a full member rather than an associate member.

I still love my church and regard it as part of my family like so many others do. I naturally prefer the older churches to the very modern designs of today but time must move on.

What of the airport – I remember it only as a cluster of small buildings and would often call for a cup of tea. After my workplace in Manchester was bombed, I came to work at the airport.

The first plane to arrive there was a Dutch plane and when the paratroopers arrived they were all Polish. One day when the paratroopers were practising a descent with their parachutes, one parachute became stuck in the plane and the plane flew to Tatton Park to try and release it and he could fall onto the soft ground. Unfortunately, this didn't work and the plane came back to Ringway and landed, bouncing the man on the ground. Sadly he died.

To see the countryside now gradually being lost to 'progress' makes my childhood seem more precious and privileged.

**Gladys Short died May 2001.**

## Here and There

Our first set of Memories this time round is from May Watkins, sharing her life and feelings from Heald Green, where she spent virtually all of her life, from 1917 onwards. Juliette and I, along with many parishioners past and present have fond memories of May and, although the piece was written more than 10 years ago, the sentiments expressed are as valid today as ever.

We continue with a new article from Hilda Davies-Jones, a mere youngster, having been born in 1927! Hilda gives us a fascinating insight into her early life in Salford and her experiences as an evacuee during WWII.

If you enjoy these articles why not contribute your own memories—we would be delighted to hear from you.

**Les**

## Here - May Watkins

I was born in Cheltenham in 1917 to Jack and Jennie Watkins and I have an elder sister, Winnie (Parkin) who, with her son, now lives in New Zealand, and I have a niece who is in England.

My father was a gardener and, in the winter of 1924, when I was seven, he took the job as Head Gardener at Cheadle Royal Hospital and for whom he won many awards.

I can remember a pony called Tommy, pulling a milk float, meeting us at the station and taking us to a large four storey house in St. Annes Road in Cheadle Royal grounds but, because it was too isolated, we moved to a cottage on Finney Lane. It was all countryside with the hospital being at the centre of the community as the main employer.



Mr. Jack Watkins, Chief gardener at Cheadle Royal.

Finney Lane was a country lane with very few houses. St Annes Road had a barrier across to stop access except at certain times, as all the fields were owned by the hospital. They farmed the land, kept cows, sheep, pigs, hens, ducks, grew vegetables, fruit and whatever was needed as part of a self-sufficiency.

I remember this very dear but cantankerous patient, who had a very special love of all the animals and birds around. On this particular day, he came through the farm gates (opposite East Avenue) on his way for a drink at the Griffin, followed by the ducks and their young. The landlord had no choice but to let him, with his entourage, into the pub for his pinta.

We had to walk to Ashfield Road School in Cheadle until Mr. Hind, who was in charge of the Cheadle Fire Station, took pity on us and borrowed an old van with benches inside and took us to school. But one day he arrived at school and found no children. The sides of the van had given way as we children had leant against them and deposited us in the road.

Mr Jones, a retired headmaster and his wife, (they had three children Elsie, Rose and Hilda), decided that Heald Green should have its own Sunday School and obtained permission to use an old Nissan hut on Finney Lane (where the Institute and Social Club now stands) with Cheadle Royal helping tremendously, as always. Eventually, the members of the Club built the present premises but, because it held dances and had a bar for social occasions, the hospital withdrew its support.

The Sunday School moved to a converted garage at the back of the cake shop at the other end of Finney Lane and eventually came to the Church Hall in 1933 when it was completed.

My father retired when he was seventy and we moved into a cottage attached to Mr Price's farm before eventually buying the house in Brown Lane. My father died in 1973 and my mother and I later moved to Hathaway Close. She died in 1985 four months short of her hundredth birthday and her funeral service was on Christmas Eve morning and was such a happy occasion.



Due to my mother's many serious operations, I was needed at home and so helped voluntarily, the District Nurse in Heald Green. When I was able, I decided to join the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VDA/Red Cross) for the war together with my friend, Marjorie Meredith. She was the daughter of the local builder, and lived in what is now the Vicarage. We were based at the Chester Military Hospital.

I was in the B.A.O.R. (British Army Of the Rhine) in Belgium when my demob came through and, at almost the same time, the urgent appeal for nurses for S.E.A.C. (South East Asia Command) came through. So, in response, I joined the Indian Army for five years but had to return home after two because the Indian Government could no longer guarantee our safety and yet I still wanted to carry on nursing disabled ex-servicemen. But because of where I had been, I could not work for six months to eliminate any infection risk.

Unable to remain idle, I answered an appeal from Mr Robinson, the manager of Burgons, to help him out temporarily as so many of his staff had the flu. During this time I severely injured my spine, so future hopes of hospital work was impossible. I later became manageress for 19 years until Burgons closed down. I then went as a temporary assistant to Mrs Ward's Spar Shop until she retired through ill-health and sold out. Next offered was a nursing position at the hospital but had to decline at that time due to my father's death.

The local doctor, Dr Shiers, and his wife asked me to go as the Occupational Therapist at Cheadle Royal and stayed for six wonderful years until my retirement.

At St. Caths, Rev Eric Mercer asked me to be a Sunday School teacher after I was demobbed. I took a class of six year old boys and followed them through to being eleven years old when the boys asked me to carry on as they formed the Junior Guild, a name chosen by them. They met on Saturday evenings and twice on a Sunday.

Peter Lucas, who was now the Vicar, ran the Anglican Young People's Association (AYPA) on Friday nights and he asked me to take over. We extended the meetings to two evenings and changed our name to the Young People's Fellowship (YPF). What a wonderful Christian group this was, running it themselves, making all their own decisions and creating such a permanent bond which still exists today, no matter where they are. They would take Services at other churches and called themselves the 'Outer Limits'.

The Ragged School in Blackburn (a lift took you up to the church room at the top of the building) often asked our YPF to go and to take part in their Services. We regularly played each other at table tennis but their members were such big hefty lads that we were rather afraid of them. Our referee was always Faith Butcher.

A special friendship was forged with Hey Head Congregation Church and exchange visits were made. On the retirement of their Minister, Mr Williams, on March 28th 1960 I chose an old book on India as his present to me and I cherish it to this day.

The YPF devised and gave shows at least three times a year, performed plays and also went around the Parish carol singing. The landlord at the Heald Green Hotel asked them to carol sing there on one occasion but Peter Lucas did not think it was a 'suitable location' but was eventually persuaded by the Landlords, Mr and Mrs Townsend.

What happy memories I have of these young people but it has been intermingled with sorrow with the tragic death of six members. All these memories will be with me for the rest of my life.

Of Heald Green, gone has the beautiful countryside that I remember and slowly disappearing is the Cheadle Royal Community and grounds. Not going, is the fellowship and family that I cherish at St. Catherine's.

Thank you St. Catherine's 'children' (of all ages) – BLESS YOU.

**May Watkins died in December 2003.**

**Up to her death she still sent over 400 Christmas Cards to her 'children' all over the world.**

## Here and There

We have memories old and new in this edition, starting with an archive article from a long time resident of the area, Elsie Williams, who gives us yet more insight into Heald Green and St Catherine's since the beginning of the war.

This is followed by a more recent article from Joan Lewis, who shares her memories of her time before she moved into the area.

If you enjoy these articles why not contribute your own memories—we would be delighted to hear from you.

**Les**

### Here - Elsie Williams



I was born at Oakmere near to Delamere, Cheshire in 1909 being the middle one of five children of George William Leech, who was a farmer, and his wife Ellen. My father was a Church Warden at Delamere Church where I was christened and I still have the magazine recording this. Eventually my father moved to Pownall Hall Farm in Bramhall (which was where the County Hotel is now) with a last move to a farm in Chelford. During this time I attended Altrincham High School and then studied at Manchester University for 4 years.

I was a teacher in the Midlands and during that time I met my future husband Eric. He was an Electrical Engineer and was moved to the company's Manchester office. For a while, I was nearer to his family in the Midlands and he was nearer to mine in Cheshire.

It was in 1939 that we decided to get married and settle in the area. We looked for a piece of freehold land to buy but none was available so we had to put in an advert for a house to buy in the south of Manchester as there were no Estate Agents and houses were very scarce in those days. We only received three replies of which two were impossible and the third was this house in Wythens Road.

The house was built in 1926 and we moved in after we were married on 19<sup>th</sup> August 1939. We were only able to furnish essential rooms at first because of limited availability with the war effort. As a teacher, I had to give up work when I married so became a full-time housewife.

The original Church Hall was there but, elsewhere, very little else. We had open fields at the back, and I do remember this little old cottage on the junction of the present Drayton Drive and Outwood Road near Cross Road. It was called Thatched Cottage and the lady in the picture was Mrs Elizabeth Bailey. It was damaged by fire in 1937 and became uninhabitable.



As Outwood Road turns left, it was just a country lane with one farm in particular that the children used to visit to see the ducks on the pond and we used to go blackberry picking in the hedgerows. I understand that when the first residents came to the overspill houses from Manchester they were very sad that it was no longer a country lane.

Curzon Road was built and at the corner of Cross Road and Bolshaw Road was a small farm which grew rhubarb. Many people do not know that all the land around, right up to Long Lane was at one time part of the Tatton Estate and that is why we have the Tatton Arms on Ringway Road.

Eric was not called up to the armed services because of his qualifications and was instead seconded to the Fairey Aviation Works at Ringway as head of the Inspection Department. The fighter planes, having been built at the Stockport factory, came to the airport for the final testing before moving into service. Eric was responsible for the final inspection of the electrical components of the aircraft, sometimes going up on a test flight. When

Faireys diversified, his preferred job was as head of a medical team, installing and servicing anti-cancer equipment which took him to hospitals and universities throughout the UK.

We had only been in the house three weeks when the Priest-in Charge, Rev. E. Christopher came to the house late one evening with a boy of 4 and a girl of 5 asking if my husband and I would take them in as evacuees. We only had a single divan in the spare room and nothing for children in the house. On the Monday, I took them to East Avenue School and was told that the children had the wrong labels on them and did not belong to the evacuated school. At the reception centre we were told that children under five had to have a parent with them and so both had to go back home to Manchester as did most of the evacuees gradually. One school for evacuees was in the Church Hall and one teacher, who was the son of a vicar in Oldham, was a lodger of ours at one time. At the end of the war there were only seven pupils left.

We were asked to billet two servicemen from the MU (Maintenance Unit) base in Outwood Road but found this very hard work as it meant cooking and generally looking after them. I was also spending two days a week helping my parents at the farm.

Next came two WRAF's who stayed until barracks were built for the unit in Wilmslow.

When we knew that the UK was secure from invasion in 1942 we decided to start a family. Anthony came in 1943, Raymond in 1946 and Diana in 1948. Both boys were christened by Rev. Grimwood and eventually became choir boys, and Diana christened by Rev. Waller. They were all involved in the Rose Queen Festivals and were members of the Youth Group and, like so many past members, still kept in touch with May. The twin daughters of my son Raymond, who lives in Australia, were christened at St. Catherine's while they were on a visit.

As for my war effort, I was a volunteer for NARPAC (National Air Raid Precaution for Animal Care) along with Miss Stephenson. This organisation was run from its headquarters in Wilmslow and we were allocated roads in Heald Green with the objective of ascertaining how many and what pets each household had (mainly dogs in those days). This was in case of an air raid and animals were found wandering the streets. We wore armbands, a badge as identification and always carried Bromide to give the animals if necessary.

I also did voluntary work in the Library, which was in a room at the back of the Social Club on Finney Lane and doubled also as the HQ of the Home Guard. I joined the Afternoon Townswomen's Guild and later joined the Ratepayers Committee. Life was always very busy but enjoyable.

Sadly, Eric died in 1985 but we had had a good family life, and travelled to many places in the world including Australia to see Raymond's family.

One memory of Rev. David Garnett will always be about the old cylindrical vacuum cleaner of ours which he bought from a Scout Jumble Sale for use in his garage. It was always a topic of conversation whenever we met (even in Chester Cathedral) as to its welfare "it's still working" until finally he told us "I'm sorry, it's just stopped".

**Elsie Williams**

At the time of writing, Elsie was keen to stay in her house in Heald Green as this is where her family knew as home, no matter where they were and the memories were very happy for them all. St. Catherine's was also part of that family life and, remained so until, eventually, Elsie moved south to be nearer to her family wher she has since died.

# Here and There

In this edition, we introduce a new element to our series, looking at memories of Heald Green in the 1930s and 1940s, as seen through the eyes of a child.

Before we start this journey of nostalgia on the growth and life of Heald Green as seen through the eyes of Anne Rushton (mother of Keith Kinsey) from 1932 let us just set the scene before then.

It was the coming of the railway in 1909 that really made it an attractive village to live in, especially for those working in the City Centre. Within 20 minutes you could travel from an industrial environment into the green and pleasant county of Cheshire. The population was only several hundred at the time.

**Below is a typical advert in the papers by builders trying to attract potential buyers for their new houses and in this case it is for the development of Wythens Road where Anne was born.**

## HEALD GREEN.

**A** Home in ideal surroundings, far away from the noise and nerve strain of town, means good health for you and your family, and here at Heald Green, just 20 minutes from London Road Station, Manchester, on the L.M.S. Railway, one can reside in the beautiful country—with pure fresh air, entirely free from factories, smoke of the city, and adjoining manufacturing towns. Why not move to the country and ensure good health, contentment and security for you and yours?

Heald Green is approximately 230 feet above sea level, being one of the highest points on the south side of Manchester, in fact it has the reputation of being considerably higher than any of its adjoining districts, and the pure country breezes, excellent sewerage and drainage system, also abundant water supply, ensure for its residents the good health which only such care and foresight can bring.

Several houses are in course of construction, and as some indication of the care and foresight that prevails in the planning of these splendid modern residences, only 8 houses are allowed to be built to the acre, which prevents any overcrowding of property.

There are many open spaces, delightful country walks in the neighbourhood, and facilities are of the very best for every kind of outdoor and indoor sports, amusements, and recreations. The shopping and educational facilities are good and within easy reach. There is a splendid fast service of trains, and buses to and from Manchester. As a residential centre it is almost perfect—health-giving air, magnificent views, and peaceful surroundings. What could one wish for better than this? The social amenities are excellent and while one can live here amidst beautiful surrounding country—real country—town life and its amusements and advantages are at the easy command of all residents.

The district is well administered, well lighted by gas and electricity, and has an abundant water supply. The local rates are moderate, much below the average, in fact the place is a delightful one in every respect.

CHOOSE YOUR HOME AND GET THE IDEAL HOUSE  
AT  
**HEALD GREEN.**  
YOU CAN'T BEAT IT!



From every angle—location, accessibility, construction and finish—you will not find at the price. Anything to equal the Wonderful Lawson Houses that are now being built at Wythens Road, Heald Green, near Handforth, Cheshire. 30 minutes by train to Heald Green Station from Manchester (London Road).

### LAWSON'S VALUE.

ACCOMMODATION COMPRISES:  
LOUNGE 21' 6" long with Bay Window and French Door.  
KITCHEN—With Range-top, large built-in cupboard with drawers, sink with draining boards, chromium plated taps, sink in office.  
HALL—With built-in Wardrobe. No further fixtures required.  
FRONT BEDROOM—With Bay Window and gas or coal fire.  
LARGE SECOND BEDROOM—With Tiled Fireplace.  
COMFORTABLE THIRD BEDROOM.  
BATHROOM and W.C. combined. (All Taps Chromium Plated).

PRICE **£395** INCLUDING PAVING & LEGAL FEE.  
FREEHOLD, subject to a Chief Rent of 5s.  
Mortgage up to 90% arranged for approved Purchasers.  
Total Weekly Payments approximately 17/6 week (including all Rates, Chief Rent and Building Society).

Call, 'Phone or Write for full Particulars:

**E. J. LAWSON** (Builder & Contractor),  
Telephone: 241. WYTHENS RD., HEALD GREEN, HANDFORTH, Cheshire.

**MANCHESTER (RINGWAY) AIRPORT:** - As the preferred site to Barton, construction of the all-grass airfield started in late 1935 and the first portion opened in June 1937 for use by Fairey Aviation, with the remaining airfield areas and the terminal buildings opened for public use in 25th June 1938. It became the Royal Air Force station 'RAF Ringway' and was operational from 1939.

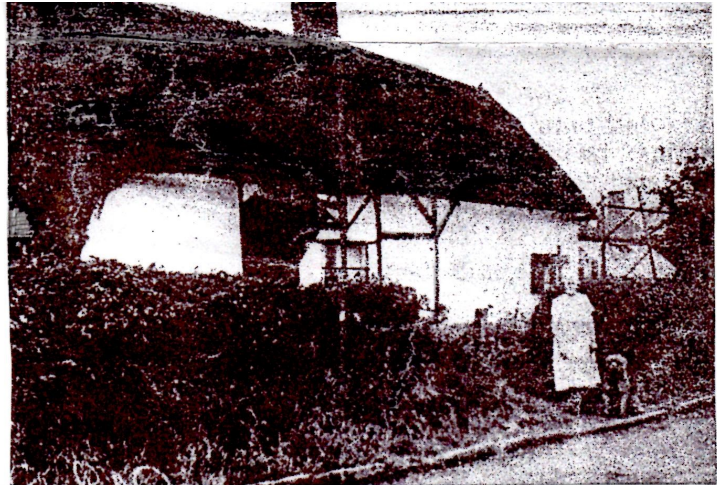
**Now let Anne take over: -**



# Memories - Anne Rushton

I was born on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1932 at 12 Wythens Road which my parents had bought, as new, in 1929 for £675 and moved in after their wedding in December. Heald Green was a straggling village with a few ancient cottages, some newer Victorian houses of different sizes and a fast rash of modern houses to accommodate the commuters from Manchester, who found that it was only a 20 minutes journey on the new rail link that was opened in 1909.

The village was surrounded by farms with small fields bounded by layered hawthorn hedges and ditches, which were cleared out each winter. Mature oak, beech and chestnut trees were everywhere and many of the streams were culverted to try and drain the land for development but it still left many ponds which were full of frogs, newts and dragonflies. After the winter snows, the water was even more visible, accumulating in every hollow of the heavy clay soil. I remember 'Tom Pits' - large circular man-made holes, in otherwise dry fields, and can only surmise that these were water holes for the animals. The holes were covered with 'Jinny Green Teeth' which 'could get you if you didn't look out!' so we children kept well away as this indicated that below was the deadly water weed.



There were several Market Gardens in the area, one of which was Chantlers on Outwood Road, near to Wilmslow Road and they sold their produce on Stockport Market.

In the early days there were many unusual houses and one in particular was 'Thatched Cottage' on Outwood Road near to what is now the junction with Drayton Drive. Miss Elisabeth Bailey (Bayley?) lived there but in 1937 sparks from a bonfire in the garden set fire to the thatched roof. My friend and I went round next day to look at the ruined remains and were amazed that an old pear tree and some raspberry canes had survived and continued to flourish, so the locals knew when the fruit was ready for picking.

**Ringway Airport—Later to become Manchester Airport:** - My first memories of this place makes me feel very old. It consisted of a large field with a wooden hut in one corner and a windsock in another. My father would hold me with my feet resting on a stranded wire fence to watch the aeroplanes descending from the sky and bump along the grass until coming to a halt. Even they looked small to me. However, this soon changed with buildings and runways being erected over an enormous area, which was surrounded by a security fence that had huge gates with tall towers at the entrance and with armed guards inside and the fencing patrolled by armed airmen. The planes grew rapidly in size. During the war, parachute troops would come for six weeks training and then ack-ack guns were installed which shook all the surrounding houses when fired. Planes would come in so low over Heald Green that we children could wave to the pilots and often they would wave back. All the younger boys became keen plane spotters and experts at identifying different types, with the help of cigarette cards (from packets of cigarette), which were avidly collected. 61 MU was a maintenance unit for the RAF in this area with Nissen Huts all over fields in Outwood Road, Cross Road and Wilmslow Road. This brought an influx of many RAF personnel which were billeted with local families. Two of these lads later joined Brown Lane Youth Club and ended up marrying girls that they had met there. I only ever saw one uniformed sailor in Heald Green, dressed in bell bottomed trousers, striped collar etc., and he was Mr Grimshaw, who lived with his wife at 14 The Oval and later moved to Outwood Drive.

**Anne Rushton**

***The next edition of Linkline will take us on a tour of the village***

# Memories - Anne Rushton

## A Tour of Heald Green in the '30s & '40s

It is difficult to know the best route to follow to tell you about Heald Green in my childhood days in the 1930's and 1940's but I will start at the top end where Cross Road joins Outwood Road. This was a v-shape field and I remember here that there were three residences on the site: - a gypsy caravan; an old railway carriage and another small wooden house with a veranda. During the war, some of the land in front of these homes had been turned over to growing vegetables.

Turning right from this corner towards Wilmslow Road, Outwood Road was still only a country lane (no footpaths) with just a few houses on the left hand side. The first one was Brookfield Farm which had a long drive to the house and cobbled yard past an orchard with a stream running through it. Next was a large bungalow, surrounded by trees, and set well back with a pond in front, against the road. Then there was a Victorian detached house, again in large grounds, with a tennis court to one side and a tree lined drive on the other. It was of a modest size and looked like half a pair of semis. The Bedford family lived here, an elderly man with two single daughters, one of whom kept house and gardens and gave music lessons while her sister was the headmistress of a Handforth school. After this, there was a large house with curious flat-topped bay windows, called Greenway, followed by a few Victorian cottages before Chantlers Nursery. Returning to and going up Cross Road, it was all fields to the right as you went towards Bolshaw Road, with an orchard at the right hand corner.

Moving down Outwood Road towards the village, just before you reach St. Catherine's Church Hall (this was the original Church opened in 1933), on the right hand side there was a large wooden ranch type building with a long veranda across the front. The Pike family lived here with several children but I can only remember the two eldest - Arthur, my age, and Geoffrey, a little younger. At the back was a duck pond as well as chickens running about and getting into the church grounds. There are now two yellow bricked detached houses on the site.



Straight opposite is Wythens Road, where we lived, which was developed and in the fields at the back of the odd numbers there was a football pitch. I can remember Tug-of-War competitions also being held there with the Heald Green Team having Billy Nixon from Outwood Farm as its anchor man. What a huge fellow he was, well over 6 feet tall, which was a big advantage for the team. To the left on this field there was only one park bench so there couldn't have been many spectators, but courting couples found it very advantageous! During the war, a 'dud' bomb fell onto this field and we kids were very disappointed that it hadn't exploded; not thinking of the implications which were that our homes would be flattened. Behind Outwood Drive is 'Steps Field', owned by the Grundy's of Daisy Bank Farm, which was a shortcut to the railway station and to buses travelling on Styal Road. At the far end is The Oval where there was gap, partly fenced, but with a space which had two wooden posts and three deep steps beyond, made up of compacted earth and held up by railway sleepers. These led into a hollow which extended the length of the last house and garden in The Oval. Up the other side of this dip was a footpath which ended at a kissing gate onto Finney Lane, almost next to the railway bridge. Cows used to gather at the five barred gate waiting to be taken over the road for milking. The last few houses on Outwood Drive, at the Outwood Road end, were built shortly before the war started but the road in front was not made up until the war ended.



Moving from Outwood Road, turning right onto Finney Lane there was, on the left hand side, Heald Green Garage, created out of farm buildings by Mr Rogerson, followed on by a large Victorian house called Beech House, then Heald Green High School, with another large house next to it (? Brook House) owned by the Rhinds family, who owned the Car Sales Showroom on Wilmslow Road. At one side, there was a narrow paddock where a little donkey was kept and I would sometimes give it a carrot to eat.



The only other house up to St Ann's Road was an attractive double fronted detached house with shuttered windows, called 'Green Gables'.

There were many footpaths through fields, some lanes and several unmade roads but the prettiest lane was, what is now, St Ann's Road North and was known as 'Lover's Lane'. It was narrow and winding with trees on either side, practically meeting overhead, and led down to a point opposite Schools Hill, known as 'Milk Can Corner', presumably because a farmer left churns of milk there for collection by a dairy. Coming back towards Finney Lane, the left hand side was the boundary of Cheadle Royal Mental Hospital. There were two white houses for hospital staff and then two large, well separated, three storey detached houses set back into the trees. The first of these was the accommodation of the head female nurse and the second for the head male nurse (Mr Fenna). I often played there with his daughter, Kathleen, or in the grounds with an avenue of horse chestnut trees where we collected conkers in the autumn. Further down the lane were two ancient cottages where some of the nurses lived.

On the corner facing onto Finney Lane, were two more of the white houses; a row of three old brick cottages then a row of tiny shops, made out of an old barn, and which were in front of the hospital laundry. The first was Heathcote's Butchers; the second was Mr Cash's Shoe Repairs and the last one was a Sweet Shop which sold all the childhood delights - lollipops, sherbert dips, liquorice shoe laces and toffee cigarettes, to name but a few. This shop had to close soon after the start of the war, probably due to sweet rationing and remained empty for a long time before it opened as Mrs Finnegan's Fent Shop. Moving down Finney Lane, towards Wilmslow Road, there were two more white houses, the second one being occupied by the Stemp Family - Mr Stemp could often be seen working in the fields with horses. He always wore close fitting leather gaiters from ankle to knee. The house had a long front garden with a fence dividing it from the field next to it on which he grew runner beans which formed a hedge of scarlet flowers in the summer, This field went down to the White House and onto the farm with a gate into its yard, opposite East Avenue. By this gate was a slaughter house and you could often hear the pigs squealing when we were in school. Carrying on up to the junction with Wilmslow Road was a derelict feedstuff Grinding Mill and a small shop on the actual corner.



Coming back towards the village, starting where the Library is now, on this triangular piece of land, there was overgrown rubble which could have been the remains of a house or houses, as there was an entrance through a hedge onto Finney Lane, shaded by a holly tree and with a cultivated bramble growing on the inner side of the hedge which produced enormous blackberries. Moving down on the right hand side is Ash Grove which was unsurfaced until much later and it was not unusual to see householders filling up the pot holes with the ashes from their coal fires - as a child I thought that this was how it got its name!

Continuing along Finney Lane were two pairs of large semis, each a different design, which were demolished eventually to make way for Mallard Court. Next were three more pairs of white semis to take you up to the corner of St Ann's Road South. Crossing over this road, there was a pile of overgrown rubble, a post box, a wall and then an entrance into Oak Farm, which was set back a few yards and had an enormous blackthorn tree growing by it. As children, we were often chased away from here by the bad tempered farmer so we didn't get much chance to watch the cows being milked, despite all our efforts.



Continuing along Finney Lane were fields until you reached West Avenue, then East Avenue, where the local school, Cheadle Etchells Council School was with a recreation ground next to it. At the end of Finney Lane was, and still is today, the Griffin Hotel, made out of an old farmhouse. The present day Inn was built in the 1960's.

Hope you have enjoyed reminiscing with me on this tour.

**Anne Rushton**

***Next time – The churches and schools in Heald Green.***

# FIFTY MEMORABLE YEARS

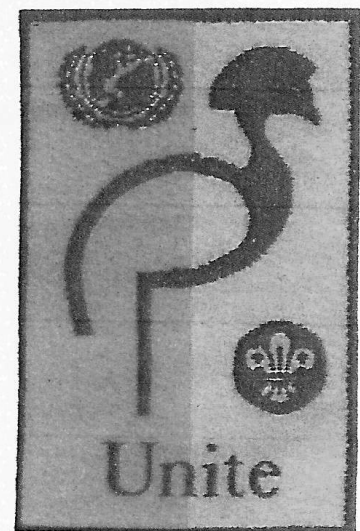
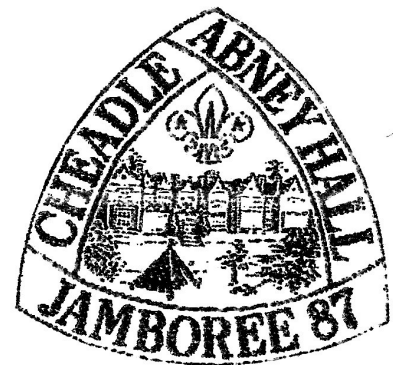
## 3<sup>RD</sup> HEALD GREEN (ST CATHERINE'S) SCOUT GROUP

In July 2014 the 3rd Heald Green (St.Catherine's) Scout Group celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of its formation. It was established at the request of members of St.Catherine's, following a Parish Week End, as boys at St.Catherine's were unable to find places with 1st Heald Green or 2nd Heald Green Scout Groups. It has been difficult to trace details of the early days due to the paucity of records, both within the Group and also at District level, but we have tried to record the key events which happened during the past fifty years.



- 1964 -The Group was registered on 24th July 1964 in Cheshire East Scout County. The first Scoutmaster was Brian Clee and the Cub Akela was Avril Domey, both members of St.Catherine's.
- 1970 -The Group was affiliated to the Church Army in 1970 and remained so until 1991, when the Church Army discontinued its affiliation scheme with the Scout Movement. John Cotton had become Group Scoutmaster and Brenda Dodgson had assumed the role of Cub Akela.
- 1971 - The Pack took part in the Rose Queen procession the theme being "The Wild Bunch" (very appropriate) That year we were also involved in the national Operation Shoe-shine to raise funds and awareness of Scouting. Scouts enjoyed a hostelling expedition.
- 1972 - Pack Holiday at Linnet Clough. By this stage Chris Morris and Doug Derbyshire had taken on the task of training the Cubs and Scouts for the Church Army awards.
- 1974 - The Troop enjoyed their summer camp at Great Tower, Windermere. The Scouts received professional canoeing instruction on Lake Windermere. During one session the instructor said that he required a volunteer to demonstrate recovery from a capsized, and a voice said "Skip is good at capsizing". And thus my fate was sealed!
- 1975 - Brenda Dodgson, Akela, left us to move to Gilwell where Brian had been appointed Director of Leader Training, and Anne Hughes took over as Akela. The Cubs enjoyed an adventure week at Heswall Boys Camp on the Wirral together with three other Church Army Packs. The Scouts undertook conservation work at Kibblestone Scout Camp. The Group also put on a Group Gang Show to entertain parents and friends. Les Taylor, Stan Bennion, Ron Poyner and Graham Jones ran the Group's swimming activities for many years and Doug Mills and Gerald Scriven managed the football team. The Troop attended the Scouting Alive in 75" rally at Linnet Clough and met the Chief Scout, Sir William Gladstone.
- 1976 - Members of the Scout Troop became involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. A number of Bronze and Silver Awards were gained and we were pleased that a number of our Scouts who joined the Corvus Corax Venture Unit in Heald Green went on to gain their Queen's Scout Award and the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award. The Group held a memorable awards evening in November when the Mayor of Stockport, Councillor R. Crook, presented some one hundred awards including D.of E Awards, Scout Proficiency Badges and Swimming Awards. The Pack Holiday this year was held at Gradbach, the theme of the camp being "Indians". The Cubs visited Linnet Clough to meet the Chief Scout, Sir William Gladstone. This year also saw the celebration of the Cub Scout Diamond Jubilee. Scoutings "Super Sausage Sizzling Spectacular" was held and the Pack successfully sizzled a sausage measuring 22 metres! (yes, 22 metres!) The summer Troop camp was held at Pocklington in Yorkshire, and a number of expeditions took place.
- 1977 -This year saw the formation of our "CAPPA" band which involved both Cubs and Scouts trained by Grandma Walker, a tutor at the RNCM. They gave enjoyable performances at our Scout functions and other venues. We took part in the "Silverree" at Abney celebrating the Queen's Silver Jubilee and many and varied events were enjoyed. Funds were raised for the Queen's Silver Jubilee Appeal. Pack holiday was at Linnet Clough, the theme of the camp being "The Romans". The Troop visited Auchengillan Outdoor Centre, in Scotland. Unfortunately the Troop was hit by sickness from an unclean water supply, but they still managed to participate in many outdoor activities.
- 1978 -The Troop camp this year was at Machynlleth in Powys. We enjoyed a good site by the river and, needless to say, a lot of our activities took place in the river. One of the scouts managed to catch a large salmon which we cooked backwoods' style and served to the visiting District Commissioner! He was a little dubious, but we all enjoyed it anyway! We had our first taste of pony trekking which proved quite hilarious as the ponies just did their own thing! We had a couple of accidents both affecting the Collinge brothers. One broke his wrist playing football and Peter gashed his leg falling off a pony. (I am pleased to record that both recovered fully). The Group once again took part in the Rose Queen celebrations with the theme "Pirates". This year we commenced the collection of postage stamps for Guide Dogs for the Blind, and the collection continued for a number of years. We entered the District Arts Festival, which had become an annual event, and this year we won the Cub Trophy, the Scout Trophy and the Group Trophy! The Troop received canoeing instruction on the Macclesfield Canal and many Scouts gained the Canoeist Badge. We held a canoe expedition on the River Wye under the supervision of a professional Instructor. The author gained notoriety by padding backwards down one of the rapids (quite unintentionally!).

- 1979 - David Collinge was chosen to represent our Group at the Jamboree in Sweden. This year we hosted the 1st Park Avenue, Mount Pearl, St Johns, Newfoundland Scout Troop. We attended a joint camp with them at Gilwell Park, during which our visitors were able to visit the highlights of London. Both Troops received the Gilwell Camping Standard Award. The camp was followed by home hospitality in Heald Green and trips were organised to the Peak District and York. Pack Holiday this year was held at Kibblestone Scout Camp and the theme was "Nepal". We also participated in the Rose Queen parade as "Moses and the Children of Israel."
- 1980 - Pack Holiday at Bowley Scout Camp. The theme was "Vikings" and the highlight of the camp was the ritual burning of our Viking Longboat on the lake.
- 1981 - Pack Holiday was held at Linnet Clough with "Indians" as the theme. This was one of the wettest Cub camps which we have experienced!
- 1982 - The 75th Anniversary of Scouting was celebrated this year and was designated "Year of the Scout". Greater Manchester East County held a rally at Linnet Clough which the Group attended. We met the Chief Scout, Major General Michael Walsh, and took part in many outdoor activities. National Cub Scout Tea-Making Fortnight was also held this year and Packs were challenged to find an unusual place to make tea. Our Pack chose Stormy Point at Alderley Edge, and also made tea in a wheelbarrow in the window of the ironmonger's shop in Heald Green!
- 1983 - Pack Holiday was held at Bowley Scout Camp and the theme this year was "Pirates". (Very popular) "Plant a Tree In '83" was celebrated by the planting of trees at Linnet Clough.
- 1984 - Pack Holiday was held at Linnet Clough and the theme of the camp was "Explorers". The planting of trees at Linnet Clough which commenced in 1983 continued in "Plant Some More in '84".
- 1985 - Group Camp at Dunham Massey.
- 1986 - This year was "Rainbow Year" when we celebrated 70 years of Cubbing. Our programme for the year was related to the various colours of the rainbow. Pack Holiday was held at Dunham Park.
- 1986 - The Beaver Colony was established in September under the leadership of Suzanne Garnett, the wife of our then vicar.
- 1987 - The first Abney Hall Jamboree was held and our Troop camped with Italian Scouts from Roma Lido. After the Jamboree we, together with 2nd Heald Green Scout Group, were able to offer home hospitality to the Italian Scouts rounded off with a barbeque and entertainment evening at Brown Lane Headquarters. The Cubs held their pack Holiday at Linnet Clough.
- 1988 - This year saw us filling water filter boxes for The Sudan with suitable clothing and requisites.
- 1989 - Group Camp was held at Dunham Massey.
- 1990 - Group Camp held at Bowley Scout Camp, Great Harwood. The Cubs visited the Chatterley Mining Museum. The Scouts camped at Ennerdale in the Lake District and the Troop attended the Chief Scout's Rally held at Linnet Clough.
- 1991 - A joint Cub and Scout camp was held at Barnswood. The Scouts had a hostelling week-end at Edale and also attended the Patrol Activity camp at Linnet Clough. The Troop took part in the second Abney Hall Jamboree and all the Scouts gained their "Abney Challenge Medal". The 3rd Newbury Scout Group organised "The Fringe Club" which took the form of a huge scavenger hunt in which teams had to collect a variety of different articles from a size 7 Panama hat to a Hornby signal box! Our Group amassed the highest number of points and became members of the "Fringe Club" and holders of the famous Frinse Cup. The Scouts won the District five-a-side Football competition held at Wilmslow Sports Centre.
- 1993 - The Group was involved in the UNITE project with the Scouts of Uganda and UNICEF. We made contact with a Scout Group in Mityana, Uganda with whom we exchanged correspondence, scouting literature, badges etc. Funds were raised to support immunisation of babies in Uganda. As a result of this project the Group gained the International Friendship Award in 1995. The Scouts were entitled to wear the Unite badge which they used to call the "Roadrunner Badge".
- 1995 - The Troop took part in the third Abney Hall Jamboree and met many UK and overseas members of the Scout movement.
- 1996 - The Cubs participated in the Around the World in 80 Days competition with an international flavour. The Cubs wrote to a Pack in New Zealand, sending information, badges and taped messages from the Cubs (We still await a reply!) Some of our members took part in the Cheadle & District Scouts & Guides Gang Show.
- 1997 - The GMEX mini jamboree was held at Linnet Clough and attracted 1500 Cubs and Scouts from Greater Manchester East Scout County and the camp was also visited by 500 Beavers. 31 members of the Group attended and gained their Polar Bear Awards for camping in sub-zero temperatures. Each group was required to represent a certain country and our chosen country was China. We



staged a very imaginative presentation including a Chinese themed camp complete with a bamboo gateway, Chinese flags and lanterns, a Chinese Tea-house and a dragon displayed by 10 Cubs and Scouts! We even served real China tea to the Chief Scout! The Pack camp was this year held at Dunham Massey. The Cubs visited the Sand Castle at Blackpool.



- 1998 -The Troop camped at Bont Fechan in Wales. The District held a Cub visit to Chocolate World at Bournville.
- 1999 -The Group held a Family Camp at Linnet Clough which was attended by over 60 members. This year also saw the fourth Abney Hall Jamboree which was attended by members of the Troop.
- 2000 - "Scout Fun 2000" was held at Ridge Danyers College, Cheadle Hulme to celebrate 50 years of Scouting as Cheadle & District and also to celebrate the Millennium.
- 2003 – "Shouting for Scouting Week" was held to bring Scouting to the public eye and also to act as a recruitment period for both leaders and youngsters.
- 2006 - The Beavers had a trip to Colwyn Bay. "Eurocub Day" was held at Linnet Clough. Cheadle District staged Italian activities. The Group received a Local Network Fund Grant from the Community Foundation for Greater Manchester to be used for development of our accommodation in the church hall.
- 2007 -The Group attended the District Service at Brown Lane Methodist Church to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the birth of Lord Robert Baden-Powell. The Group also attended the County Centenary Camp at Linnet Clough. The Japanese contingent attending the jamboree were accommodated in St Catherine's Hall for a couple of nights. The Beavers, Cubs and Scouts took part in the District Treasure Hunt.
- 2008 - Abney Scout & Guide Centre celebrated its Silver Jubilee.
- 2009 -Members of the Troop attended the JOTTA Camp at Linnet Clough and gained a significant number of badges. The Scouts took part in the St George's Fun Day at Bradshaw Hall and went to the Olympic Games Camp at Sandiway. The Scouts won first place in the District Camp Cooking Competition held at The Seashell Trust. The Derek Turner 5-a-side Football Tournament was held at the Trafford Centre.
- 2010 -The Beavers visited Gulliver's World and the Cubs camped at Grappenhall. The Cubs and Scouts attended the Join In Jamboree Camp at Linnet Clough. The Scouts took part in the District Wide Game at Abney and attended the Mayfest Camp at Linnet Clough and enjoyed kayaking, rock climbing and The Cube. At Christmas they delivered hampers to the Old Peoples' Day Centre and enjoyed an indoor Winter Camp at Sandiway.
- 2011 - The main camp was at Southport "Waterside Camp" owned by the local association (a far from perfect site.) The Beavers had a sleep-over at Abney and went to the Beaver 25 Year Celebration at Linnet Clough. The Scouts also held a camp at Sandiway. A grant from the Manchester Airport Community Support Trust enabled the Group to purchase a closed trailer for camp use. All sections are involved in the International Friendship Award with a Group in Japan which Lydia organised when she visited Japan for the International Jamboree. The Scouts held a winter camp at Linnet Clough. The Cubs organised an Entertainment Evening for parents and friends and gained their Entertainer's Badges. The Scouts also camped at Bibby's Farm near Chorley where they enjoyed kayaking, rafting and archery.
- 2012 - The Pack attended the District Camp at Bispham (very wet!) and the Scouts had a winter camp at Linnet Clough (also very wet!) The Pack also enjoyed a Christmas camp at Gradbach.
- 2013 - There was a joint Cub and Scout camp at Dunham Massey. The Beavers held a sleep-over and the Cubs a camp at Abney (for once the weather was too hot!) The camp had an Indian theme complete with tepees. Members of the Troop attended the JOTTA Camp at Linnet Clough and were immersed in technology! The Group held a Quiz Night with the proceeds going to Cancer Research. The Group paraded at the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Consecration of St Catherine's Church. The whole Group visited the Science & Industry Museum in Manchester. The Scouts enjoyed a tour of Manchester Airport and the PL's attended a training Camp at Linnet Clough.
- 2014 - The Scouts camped at Barnswood and also took part in a canoeing activity on the Mersey. The Group held its 50th Anniversary Camp at Linnet Clough.

You will see from the foregoing that we have been a fairly active Group for the past fifty years. Like most Groups, we have had our ups and downs but have always made every effort to provide our Beavers, Cubs and Scouts with interesting programmes to enhance their individual skills and help them to become responsible members of the community.

Our former members can be counted in hundreds and we are pleased to report that a number of them are still involved in Scouting. We owe a debt of gratitude to dozens of leaders and Helpers who have supported the Group in the past and present, for without their energy and time 3rd Heald Green could not exist.

If I have made any mistakes in the time-line please let me know so that I will not make the same mistake again.

**Peter Hughes**  
**Former Group Scout Leader**

# **Memories - Anne Rushton**

## **The Churches, Schools & Recreation Facilities from the 1930's.**

### **THE CHURCHES.**

During this time, there were only two churches in Heald Green Village, Brown Lane Methodist Chapel and St Catherine's C of E Church on Outwood Road.

### **BROWN LANE METHODIST - opened 28/9/1935:-**

I went to Sunday School at Brown Lane which was reached by a path through the fields at the side of Beech House. A shallow stream ran by this path which was culverted under Finney Lane. On a fine day, on our way home, we would paddle in the water and also see who could go the farthest under the tunnel. We weren't over ambitious on this challenge as it was too damp, dark and low and we were wearing our Sunday best clothes. On the way home, I would dry my feet with a bunch of grass, hoping that I would look as immaculate as I was sent out. Probably because of all this I quite enjoyed Sunday School. When I was about ten we were asked to sign 'The Pledge' - vowing that you would never take alcohol - I refused because I said that when I was older, I might want to take a drink. Shock, horror! Of course this was reported back to my parents.



The Sunday School Treat, held every summer, was a trip by train to Styal Woods. There would be egg and spoon races, three-legged and sack races in a small field near to the cottages, plus a sandwich and cake for tea and at some time a rush to the swing bridge over the river - now long gone. How this bridge stood the weight of several children I will never know. It was made of wooden planks with a twisted wire handrail and suspended by ropes from metal stanchions. We would use our legs to make it swing to-and fro. The day ended with a sing-song round the harmonium in the little chapel before catching the train home, when each child was given a packet of Smiths Potato Crisps with its tiny blue paper screw of salt.

The church once held a Rose Queen fete in a private garden, enjoyed by some but so totally eclipsed by the ceremony at St Catherine's that it was never held again.

After the end of the war, an excellent Youth Club was formed with the stipulation that you had to be fourteen or over and attend the Sunday evening service. The Friday activities included table tennis, snooker and drama - we performed plays; held bring and buy sales; parties; dances and even cricket matches. It had a very good leader, Mr Rastall, with his wife serving much appreciated refreshments.

### **ST. CATHERINE'S CHURCH :-**

It has always been a hive of activity, as it is now. What is now the church hall was itself the church and was opened in 1933. The congregation sat on rows of ordinary chairs for the services or film shows but if the hall was used for other purposes, the chairs were pushed to the sides. The altar faced the congregation but could be completely separated from the hall by a built-in wooden screen. On the right side was a small vestry and on the left was a small kitchen. There was also a piano near the vestry door. A front extension was added, with cloakrooms and kitchen and I do remember seeing a decrepit shed round the back that contained a privy midden (toilet) with a double seat.



Guides, Brownies, Scouts and Cubs all held meetings here and one of my earliest memories was accompanying my mother to sessions of the League of Health and Beauty where ladies in black satin shorts and white blouses were doing vigorous exercises to music. Even at that tender age I found the sight of them all lying on the floor and 'cycling' very amusing, which made me very unpopular. There were many social events held such as sales-of-work, dances and classes in everything. Because I was a member of Brown Lane I didn't take part in much.

The Rose Queen Fete was first held in 1938 and was the high spot of the year. I was particularly envious of the

girls taking part. The procession started at the Heald Green Hotel, led by the Cheadle Silver Prize Band and wound its way through Finney Lane and Outwood Road to the church. The new queen would sit on her throne on the back of a lorry surrounded by small attendants with baskets full of rose petals, which were strewn before her on the red carpet which led to the dais where she would be crowned by the retiring queen. This all took place on the field where the new church now stands. There were other floats in the procession and the scouts and guides in their uniforms marched alongside. After the ceremony, the fun began with sideshows, drinks and eats and various other things for sale. The admission was three pence but a few of us 'found' a gap in the hedge to avoid this. As teenagers, many of us went to the Friday night 'hop' where we would dance to the latest numbers played on the piano with great verve by a lady called Gladys. She had bright red hair, rigidly waved and had to sit on several cushions to reach the keyboard. During the war St Catherine's seemed busier than ever with its social events.

When the new church was built in 1955, a carillon was installed in the tower but there was a lot of nostalgia for the 'old tin bell' which had shattered Sundays for a long time. It was soon transferred to the new building and is still in use today.

The church has continued to be a beacon in the village.

### **ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH (Christ Church): -**

Before the present church on Finney Lane was formally opened in January 1962, the congregation met in the Upper Room at the Heald Green Hotel on Finney Lane with the Priest from St Chad's Church in Cheadle celebrating Mass.



### **LONG LANE UNITARIAN CHURCH (Heald Green United Reform Church):**

This is on Wilmslow Road and was part of the hamlet of Long Lane, Cheadle until it was absorbed into Heald Green. The church was built in 1867 but still has a lot of historical details retained, when the new church was built.



## **THE SCHOOLS.**

In the earlier days, all the schoolchildren had to walk to Cheadle for their education regardless of the weather, but it was obvious that the way the population was increasing local schools were necessary. The first was Cheadle Etchells Council School on East Avenue, opened in 1935 in time for the Silver Jubilee of King George V, and I can vaguely remember going to the celebrations with a red, white and blue woollen golly pinned to my coat. This was probably my first look at the school that I was to attend later.

Because the school year started on 1<sup>st</sup> September and my birthday was 27<sup>th</sup> October, I was nearly six when my lessons began. Luckily, my father had already taught me some reading so I was not at a disadvantage. I think that I was so excited that I was sick on my first day.

When I started, there were four classrooms and an assembly hall with desks, each seating two children. The teacher's desk faced the children and behind her was the blackboard. Miss Humphries had the reception class; you then went up to Miss Faraday's class (she played the piano); then to Miss Holland's class and finally to Miss Mayle, who was also the headmistress.

The classrooms were light and airy with big windows overlooking East Avenue and large low windows with a long veranda outside looking onto the playground. There were two playgrounds, one for the boys and one for the girls bounded on one side by a row of toilets and the other by cloakrooms. At the foot of these yards was an iron railing fence with a gate and a field beyond, where we were allowed to play on hot summer days.

The hall could be divided by folding doors, the top half of which had square panes of frosted glass. At the boys' cloakroom end of the school, there was a tiny kitchen next to Miss Mayle's office and at the other end was the teachers' staff room, near to the girls' cloakroom. The school caretaker lived on East Avenue and seemed to have an intense dislike of children.

There was a school bus laid on for the school, which my friend and I had to catch at the corner of Finney Lane



and Outwood Road and the fare was a halfpenny. When the war started in 1939 the service finished. Soon workman came digging vast holes near the girls cloakroom to house two air raid shelters. School dinners also started in 1942 for children who did not live near to the school but still had to go home for lunch. They didn't want the children to be caught outside in an air raid.

There were also two Private Schools in Heald Green. One was at no. 6 Outwood Drive and called Vernon House. It was established in 1934 and run by Miss Margaret Watts and her brother, Maurice, who lived at no. 8 Outwood Drive. There were four assistants and it catered for up to 46 children in the age range of 4-8 and was very popular. They wore a navy blue uniform and would sometimes be seen walking round the village in strict crocodile formation. It eventually closed in 1962.

The other private school was established at Beech House on Finney Lane and known as Heald Green High School. It catered for up to 50 pupils in the age range of 8 -15 and the headmaster was Mr Spoonly. They wore brown uniforms (we called them swankpots). At home time, if our two schools should happen to meet, there would always be a fight! Eventually the school moved to Gatley and became known as Gatley High School. Beech House became an A.R.P. (Air Raid Precautions) Post and had a siren installed during the war. When in the Junior Red Cross, I didn't see much of the rooms in Beech House, though I do remember high ceilings, desks and walls disfigured by cream and brown paint but do recollect a handsome staircase sweeping up from the entrance hall and the beautiful beech tree at the front with its wonderful autumn colours.

Later in the 1960's, because of the increase in the population of the village, three new primary schools were built - Prospect Vale, Outwood Road. and Bolshaw.

## **RECREATION FACILITIES.**

The recreation ground/park on East Avenue was surrounded by iron railings with gates, which were padlocked on Sundays and evenings. The roundabouts had individual locks which protruded from the ground and the conscientious park keeper (who lived on East Avenue) would also immobilise the swings and tie up the chains on the Maypole.

Unfortunately, one day, a little girl playing on the Spiders Web slipped through the gap and caught the calf of her leg on the brake resulting in a terrible gash which left her with a permanent scar. As a result, the brakes were removed and sometime later, railings were taken away to be melted down and made into armaments as part of the war effort. Presumably, this left the 'parkie' out of a job.

In all, the ground had several structures, which I imagine are now gone, owing to modern Health and Safety Regulations. There were two roundabouts - one called Spiders Web and the other the Kings Crown; a Dobby-Horse, a Swing-Boat; some swings and a Maypole with several long chains ending with D shaped wooden handles. All were made of iron and wood.

## **CHEADLE ROYAL HOSPITAL**

This was built on a large acreage of land including five farms and some cottages. The hospital was divided into men's and women's sections and the patients were privately financed. There were separate buildings for the chronically sick - some of whom could be dangerous – and houses for doctors, nurses and other staff, including those who worked on the land. The hospital was almost self-sufficient and run like a cross between a prison and an elegant hotel. It was only after the N.H.S was formed in 1948 that non-fee paying patients were admitted.

Very few patients were allowed outside the grounds but one, always accompanied by a male nurse, could be seen walking on Finney Lane. We children gave him the nickname 'The Talking Man' because he was forever muttering to himself. More difficult patients took their exercise in enclosed yards while others were allowed round the grounds, always accompanied by nurses.

The public was not barred. There was a very pretty cricket ground where matches were played and I believe that dances were held in the ballroom with outsiders invited.

The children of employees attended Cheadle Etchells School and many parents living in East and West Avenue had associations with the hospital.

# **Memories - Anne Rushton**

## **Everyday Life in Heald Green**

### **from the 1930s.**

The village was typical of its time, with Finney Lane being the main shopping area with all the shops that were required for everyday living. From the station on the right hand side there was Halsall's Hardware and Ironmongers which stocked everything needed for the home; next door on the corner with Outwood Drive was the County Bank; the opposite corner had Skerratt's the Butcher; then Burgons the Grocers; next to it was the Post Office, managed by Mr Wilkinson and with its red post box and telephone kiosk on the pavement outside and finally on this side, at the end of the row, was Lee's Bakery with the bakehouse at the back, from which came that most wonderful smell of freshly made bread, all made with National Flour - a mixture of brown and white grain which resulted in the bread looking grey but the taste was alright. A large loaf (2lb) cost 4½d - equivalent of 2 pence today.

Across Finney Lane, on the opposite side, the first shop, in a large shed, was Mr Norbury's Greengrocers and Fishmongers but after the war they built a small shop next to Mr Dunn's Newsagent and Tobacconist which had adverts on the fencing for all the popular cigarettes of the time - Senior Service, Capstan Full Strength, Players Please, Woodbines (the cheap cigarette) and Craven 'A' (good to smoke for your throat's sake!!!). Next was Roberts the Chemist; then a detached Art-Deco type building which housed the District Bank with the door on the corner with Neal Avenue. Following along Finney Lane there was a short parade of five shops: Lloyd's Greengrocers; Mrs. Birch's Haberdashery; Bill's Bakery and Café; Mrs Owen's Babywear; a Bike Shop which sold bicycles but, probably because of the war, it was empty for a while before my mother and aunt opened it up, about 1948/9 as a shoe shop, for about ten years. The last shop, John Williams the Grocers, was a large detached building with a wide drive at the side for delivery vans and I remember biscuits were sold loose by the weight and displayed in large tins with glass lids. The most tempting one contained milk chocolate digestive biscuits but for me were forbidden fruit because too many 'point' coupons were needed. Next to this store were two semi-detached houses followed by Rogerson's Garage.

The nearest dentist was in Gatley or Cheadle and the local GP was Dr Hewetson who lived on Styal Road. We did have one village policeman, Mr Helsby, who lived in Preesall Avenue. Our milk was delivered by pony and trap, with a milk churn sitting in the middle, from which the milkman would dispense two or one pint measures into our jugs. The treat here was to be allowed to have a short ride on the cart. The ragbome man came with his shallow cart and would swop 'donkey stones' (used for whitening steps) for old clothes. Two laundry vans collected dirty washing to relieve the housewives with no running or hot water in the house - the service also included starching the men's collars. We had the gypsies knocking on doors selling their wares. The local coalman, Mr Finch, who lived in The Oval, collected the coal and coke in his lorry from large heaps on the northbound side of the station approach; there was a regular window cleaner and weekly dust bin collections and the mail was delivered by the postman on his bike.

#### **SPRING CLEANING: - that dreaded word!**

Most of the middle class ladies had a charwoman who did the rough work such as this. Many houses had wooden floors, sometimes stained or covered in linoleum, with a carpet square on top in the living rooms and a small bedside mat in the bedrooms. Not everyone had a vacuum cleaner so floors were regularly swept. Every year the house would be turned upside down for 'Spring Cleaning' usually just before Easter. Mats and carpets would be dragged outside, heaved over the clothes line and beaten with a special carpet beater made of wicker and raising clouds of dust over you and the garden.

The chimney sweep was booked and children would be stationed outside waiting for his brush to emerge from the chimney pot on the roof. The soot was usually left in a designated area for collection or scattered over the garden. Curtains were taken down and washed, windows and floors were cleaned and all the furniture was polished and waxed - what a relief to see the end of this annual ritual.

#### **HEATING: -**

Public buildings had coal-fired central heating but, in houses, the main source of heat was from open coal fires. Cavity Wall and Roof Insulation were unheard of my day. Modern houses would have a coal fire grate with a back boiler behind it to supply the hot water through the taps but for the bath a gas-fired geyser was often installed. An inside toilet was deemed as unhygienic to have inside the house.

Bath night was a weekly event with a change of clothes for the next day, although grubby children were often washed

in the kitchen sink daily. Those houses without a bathroom would bring in a tin bath, usually kept outside in the back yard, and if there was room, it would be placed in front of the coal fire. It would be filled and topped-up with kettles and pans of boiling water with the family taking turns in the same water.

In the winter hot water bottles made from rubber or stone were placed in beds at night.

### **RECREATION: -**

Because there was very little traffic about, it was safe to play on pavements and streets. We girls, skipped; played 'whip and top' using either one shaped like a mushroom or one like a short fat carrot; hoops; hopscotch and leapfrog. Boys would kick a ball of any shape or size and play Cowboys and Indians with other variations. They would climb trees and suspend a home-made swing from the branches. We all played on scooters, roller skates, pedal cars, tricycles, bogies made from wooden boxes and pram wheels and Hide and Seek was always popular.

In the winter we had snowball fights; make slides on the snow and built snowmen.

If the weather was too bad to be outdoors and in the long evenings, the family would listen to the wireless - BBC Home Service; the Light Programme and Children's Hour. Popular card and board games were Ludo, Snakes and Ladders, Snap, Sorry; Monopoly and Draughts, to name but a few.

The local cinemas were the Tatton in Gatley; the Electra in Cheadle; the Forum in Northenden and the Elysian in Cheadle Hulme for which you had to catch the bus. A visit to Belle Vue was a special treat, with the Circus in the winter and the Zoo and Entertainments in the summer.

### **CLOTHES: -**

These always had to be practical for the time of the year.

**Men**, especially the elderly, wore long-sleeved woollen vests with long underpants and topped by enormous flannel shirts, which tucked between their legs, with a woollen jumper over and a tweed jacket for outdoors. Younger men had shorter versions of the underwear and perhaps a long cotton shirt and tie with a sleeveless pullover under the jacket. Trousers flies were buttoned as metal zips were only introduced after the war. Socks were woollen and constantly needed darning; shoes were leather; trousers had turn-ups; with hats and a gabardine raincoats a must.

**Women** - their clothes were equally functional and unglamorous unless you were wealthy enough to afford silk and lace underwear. Often no bras were worn as they were thought to be unhealthy but most wore corsets and fine long woollen vests. Knickers were cotton interlock and reached from the waist to just above the knee. The corsets had suspenders sewn on to hold up the thick rayon stockings. Again if you could afford silk stockings they always had a seam up the back. Shoes were leather with a 3" heel the maximum height.

Younger women, wanting prettier things, would sometimes buy underslips and french knickers made of artificial silk and trimmed with lace. As you can imagine the older women disapproved of these flimsies with the comment 'will soon catch their deaths'. Trousers only came in during the war and rarely worn in civvy street and only then for holiday wear.

Older women wore skirts and woollen jumpers in the winter and in the summer, dresses had a length well below the knee. Younger women wore skimpier dresses reaching just above the knee mainly because of the shortage of materials and limited clothing coupons. 'Sunday Best' in the summer necessitated a hat and short white gloves be worn.

All women wore aprons or cross-over pinafores when doing everyday chores. Tradesmen called at the back door -the apron stayed on- a knock at the front door the apron came off and hair was straightened before opening the door.

**Children** were dressed similarly to their elders with girls wearing a liberty bodice over the vest in the winter. This bodice was like a thick cotton waistcoat with rubber buttons up the front. Many clothes worn were often 'hand-me-downs' from older siblings.

Boys wore short trousers until about 14 years old with thick woollen knee length socks, which had a turn over at the top and an elastic garter keeping them up - which made excellent catapults! Similarly, ties had to be worn and again the boys found other uses for.

Babies wore wool for warmth and in bed wore a warm sleeping bag over their night clothes as they were inclined to kick the covers off.

I hope you have enjoyed sharing my memories with me and recalling your own.

**Thanks - Anne Rushton**

# Memories - Elsie Worthington



On 13<sup>th</sup> March 1940, my parents, brother Bill and I moved from Chorlton to live at 18 Queensway Heald Green. My father, Douglas, was a civil engineer and a friend of Walter Meredith the builder, who built all the houses on the church side of Outwood Road, round into Queensway up to St Austell Drive, Preesall and Stalmine Avenues. In fact my father built the road for the houses in Preesall Ave. Walter Meredith built the Vicarage as a house for himself and the house and bungalows next door for his family. It was snowing when we moved in and I remember looking out of the front bedroom window and seeing lots of hares running across the fields.

At the start of September 1939, all the Manchester schools were evacuated out of the city and I was sent to Blackpool and the memories have never left me. I can remember leaving by train from Exchange Station, with my mother in tears and with no idea where we were going. It was only when we saw Blackpool Tower did we know our destination. There were twelve girls billeted in each boarding house and our lives were so miserable that that I came home after six weeks. In the meantime my brother had been sent to my aunt in Chester.

There has been a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary reunion of the Manchester evacuees at the Town Hall and it brought back many memories for so many who came. I have been back to see the house in Blackpool and it has since been converted to flats.

In Heald Green I was sent to The Heald Green High School in Beech House run by the Spoonleys, then onto Gregg's Commercial School in Manchester while my brother attended Manchester Grammar School. I worked for the Commercial Union.

All this was possible because of the good train connections to Manchester. (I can remember that the porter's name at Heald Green station was Archie).

My mother worked in the Blood Bank at Gatley.

On 10<sup>th</sup> June 1933 the foundation stone for the church was laid and in the July, the 1st Heald Green Guide and Scout Groups were formed but, because the church was a daughter church to St. James Gatley, the two groups were registered as St. James, Gatley (the Scout Group was disbanded at a later date but reformed).



I joined the Guides which held meetings initially in the Tennis Club on Outwood Drive because the Church Hall was utilised as a school for the evacuees while they were in Heald Green.

We eventually were able to move to the Church Hall.



As the Hall was the Church and Services held, we always had to brush up and put everything back after our meetings ready for the next day's use. The toilets were in wooden huts at the rear of the building.

## **Harvest Festival in the Hall in 1951**

The Guiders were occupied with War Work and we kept the guides going in their absence. I was made Lieutenant and eventually Captain - Hilda Bamber was the Brown Owl for the Brownies. We regularly went to camp using ex-army bell tents and coping with food rationing. My association with the Guiding Movement has continued ever since.

Entertainment for the young ones was in the Church Hall with the Saturday morning film shows -Will Hayes films being very popular. (*The hatch above the front entrance to the main hall is where films were projected from after the front extensions were built*).

I can still picture René Gadd often having to tell the audiences to keep quiet.

Saturday evening dances were held to raise funds for the new church with Cliff and Gladys Short leading, and teaching the young ones how to dance the Gay Gordons. I also went to Young Peoples Fellowship (YPF) and joined the Junior Red Cross.

I attended Confirmation Classes taken by the Rev. Grimwood and I am sure that these were held in a house in Outwood Drive.

Mr Anderton and Mr. Goole, a Lay Reader, organised the distribution of fund-raising church building boxes and church magazines. I and my friend, Kathleen Fenner, were part of the team who distributed these and collected the boxes etc.

My memories of Heald Green are of a small village with a brook running in the field, where Freshfield is now, and having to jump across a wooden plank to cross it into Ainsdale Drive. This stream is now culverted under the road and under the footpath to Brown Lane before eventually re-appearing down Styal Road.

The small group of houses, where I now live in Eastleigh Road, were built on a field known as Old Woman's Field and during the war I remember there being an ack-ack gun on the corner of Outwood Road, plus a sandbagged covered shelter. We, like so many families, had evacuees and airmen from the MU site off Outwood Road.

I recall the garage on Finney Lane having an open fire inside and Mr Rogerson feeding it with dripping old sump oil.

I remember the airport opening in 1938, before we came to live in Heald Green. Our car had a sliding roof and my brother and I sat on the roof to watch everything going on.

Barton Airport was the first Manchester Airport.

99999

Ringway was very small and did not really develop commercially until the late 1950's.

We went to the RAF Open Day in September 1950 when it was just a big field with a runway and a hangar and with a signpost which read 'If you get lost ask an airman'.

The nice part of growing up in a small community is that I am still in touch with most of these old friends today. Happy memories!

**Elsie Worthington**

Elsie Worthington died January 2008.

## **Memories - Sandra Buckley**

I was born in the Gatley Nursing Home and Mum told me that the nurse called me 'the bambino' as I had such a mop of very dark hair. We lived in a bungalow on Brown Lane, on the corner of Prospect Vale. My Uncle Eric and Auntie Nan had let my parents live there when they got married.

I really cannot remember much about my very early years, apart from when I was three years old, when we moved across the road in Brown Lane. We were here when my sister was born five and a half years after me.

I had started school at Cheadle Etchells, which was the only one in Heald Green then, and I quite enjoyed it, especially in the Juniors. This is where I met Elaine Roseby (now McCracken), as the teacher had asked me to look after her, and we have been friends ever since. The next step was to the Secondary School, Broadway, in Cheadle. Here I thrived at sport – Hockey, Netball - with the large open grounds facilities after Junior School - and I loved English, History, French and R.E. (Religious Education as it was then known) and can truly say that I enjoyed them all. I travelled to Broadway School on my bike down St Annes Road which was only a rough dirt track then – long before Wimpey built the houses down there. It was open fields all the way down to 'Pigs Valley' as we knew it and beyond, with all the land being owned by Cheadle Royal Hospital. I remember the workmen starting to dig the Kingsway Extension, now the A34 into Manchester. At the end of my third year at Broadway, I transferred to Wilmslow Grammar School to complete my education.

My uncle was the local plumber and opened up the DIY Hardware Shop on Long Lane. He asked me to join him and be responsible for the Accounts and ordering the stock for the shop so when I left School I went there. It was a joy to work for him as he was always caring, fair and kind to everyone. One of the local doctor's, Dr Chapman, a keen DIY man, wanted to fit central heating in his new house and my uncle told him how to go about it and helped him with it. He would not take any money and just did it out of the goodness of his heart - this was his way of showing his Christian Witness.

I have always attended St Catherine's and Elaine and I used to go together to Evening Prayer when Peter Lucas was the Vicar. I attended the Sunday School, followed by the Young Peoples Fellowship with May Watkins in charge and what a wonderful time we all had together. May put on some really good entertaining shows for the Church and I remember Elaine, Patsy and myself doing the Highland Fling and the Charleston, taught to us by Christine Mayle. There was acting and singing and I particularly remember David McCracken singing 'The Day That The Rain Came Down'. We also had a Skiffle Group and all in all we were all part of this wonderful fellowship of fun at St Caths and we made and still have many friends from this time. Recalling this makes me realise just how much fun we all had.

*Thanks  
for the  
Memories*

The Parish Church of  
**Saint Catherine's, Heald Green**



## **Our Vision**

**We serve Jesus locally  
and in the wider world,  
inviting and encouraging  
each other on our jour-  
ney of faith.**

**[www.stcatherineshg.org.uk](http://www.stcatherineshg.org.uk)**

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our services, rooms for hire etc.**